

Our Gentle King 9-11-05

Matthew 21:1-11 (NIV)

¹As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." ⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ⁵"Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" ⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" ¹⁰When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" ¹¹The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Jesus climbed the Jericho road for the last time. He had been up this road almost every year of His earthly life going to the Passover celebration. (Luke 2:42) He first entered Jerusalem as a baby carried by His mother from the nearby town of Bethlehem. He came at the age of 12 for His Bar mitzvah and stayed behind to talk to the religious leaders. (Luke 2:46-47) He came with His first few disciples when He began His ministry, (John 2:12-13) and then with the twelve. (John 5:1) Now, this last time, He is coming with a crowd. (Matthew 20:29)

There was tension in the air. The disciples followed in amazement, knowing that He was walking right into the stronghold of those who wished Him dead. The other followers were afraid but hopeful. (Mark 10:32) Was the kingdom of David about to be restored? Was this Son of David about to send the Romans fleeing, end religious corruption, and usher in the golden age of the nation of Israel? Or would all their hopes be dashed by the murder of their prophet, just as the prophets of old were murdered in Jerusalem? Other so-called Messiahs had come and been banished or killed. Their followers were killed or scattered. They were probably wondering which it would be for them.

¹As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples... As Jesus approached Jerusalem, He sent disciples ahead to what was probably the village of Bethany. It was there, a short time before, that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. (John 11:43-44) The village was turned upside down when this prominent man in their village walked out of the grave. The community in mourning turned into a community of celebration. It

Commented [notes1]: ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom.
Luke 2:42 (NIV)

Commented [notes2]: ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.
Luke 2:46-47 (NIV)

Commented [notes3]: ¹² After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days. ¹³ When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
John 2:12-13 (NIV)

Commented [notes4]: ¹ Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews.
John 5:1 (NIV)

Commented [notes5]: ²⁹ As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him.
Matthew 20:29 (NIV)

Commented [notes6]: ³² They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.
Mark 10:32 (NIV)

Commented [notes7]: ⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."
John 11:43-44 (NIV)

was because of this powerful sign and the village accepting Him that the religious leaders decided Jesus had to die. (John 11:45; John 11:53)

²saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. There is a lot of conjecture as to how this came about. Did Jesus prearrange it? Did He use supernatural insight? Just how did He know that there would be a donkey and colt there? He knew the prophecy of Zechariah. The king would come riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zechariah 9:9) It was time for that entrance. We saw before from Scripture how He knew He would be raised in three days. (Hosea 6:2) Time and time again we have seen Him quote Scripture. He knew the time had come. His Father would provide this animal to fulfill Scripture. It couldn't be otherwise. (Isaiah 55:11)

When you know something is of God, when you know it is His time and His will, and according to His Word, it comes to pass. Sometimes people will tell me they have faith for something, but it doesn't happen. They may have strongly believed it would happen, but it either wasn't God's will, or it wasn't His time. Jesus relied on the Holy Spirit to confirm God's will and God's time. He knew from the Word that this must come to pass. (Amos 3:7)

³If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." Remember the people of Bethany had seen a great miracle. Lazarus was walking among them again. When the disciples referred to "the Lord", they knew exactly who they were referring to. They had seen these disciples at the funeral turned party. Of course they would loan the donkey and colt to the Master. But even more than that, this was God's will and timing. This was according to the Word of God. It couldn't come out differently. (Isaiah 46:10)

⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ⁵"Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" That is found in Zechariah 9:9. If the ancient kings of Israel came on a stallion, it meant war or justice. If the king came into town on a donkey, it meant blessing and peace. Jesus was trying to help people understand the difference between the first and second coming. He had come as the Prince of Peace to all who would receive Him. They were looking for a king on a stallion. The proof of that would be clear a few days later when they chose to free an insurrectionist, Barabbas, rather than Jesus. (Matthew 27:21)

This King came in gentleness. He does not force His rule in our lives. He gently shows us that it is His right to rule our lives since He purchased us from the slavery of sin with His own blood. (Revelation 5:9) It is only fitting and proper that we yield our lives to this gentle King who gave us all that we have and are. In this first coming He does not assert His Lordship, He invites us to accept His

Commented [notes8]: ⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him. John 11:45 (NIV)

Commented [notes9]: ⁵³ So from that day on they plotted to take his life. John 11:53 (NIV)

Commented [notes10]: ⁹ Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9 (NIV)

Commented [notes11]: ² After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. Hosea 6:2 (NIV)

Commented [notes12]: ¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:11 (NIV)

Commented [notes13]: ⁷ Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. Amos 3:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes14]: ¹⁰ I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. Isaiah 46:10 (NIV)

Commented [notes15]: ²¹ "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered. Matthew 27:21 (NIV)

Commented [notes16]: ⁹ And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. Revelation 5:9 (NIV)

wonderful, gentle, loving Lordship. It is such a sweet rule that He even calls it rest. (Matthew 11:28)

The other spiritual power that would be lord over our life is anything but gentle or restful. It is more like being driven. Crafty is the word to describe him. (Genesis 3:1) He promises what he never delivers. He tells us some minimal cost but then extracts more than we could ever have imagined. His M.O. is to kill, steal and destroy. (John 10:10) Not what you would call gentle by any means. He promises you can rule yourself, but before long you will be his subjugated slave. His most cunning trick of all is to get you to think that you are your own master when he has enslaved you to his destructive rule. As for me and my house, we choose the gentle King. We choose the One who invites us to yield our lives to His gentle Lordship, a place of rest. Who have you chosen?

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. Matthew is the only one that tells us about the two animals, a donkey and her foal. The other three Gospel writers focus on the foal. It was pretty amazing, for Mark tells us no one had ever ridden this colt. (Mark 11:2) But then, Jesus is the Creator. Creation obeys Him. He called the fish into the disciples' nets. (Luke 5:6) He stopped wind and waves with a word. (Mark 4:39) He healed deformities by commanding it to be so. (Luke 6:10) It should not surprise us that the foal yielded its back.

This is the first time I noticed that Jesus used both animals. Did you see that? He "sat on them". I imagine he rode the colt as far as it was able and then switched to the mother who was bigger and stronger. God cares about His creatures. If He cares about the load they carry, don't you think He is concerned about the load you are carrying? That is why He invites us to come and cast our load upon Him. He is not only gentle, but He is compassionate. He cares about what you are enduring today. (1 Peter 5:7)

⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. They paved the way for the King with palm branches and their cloaks. The disciples and other followers must have thought they had arrived, that they were at the beginning of a new kingdom of Israel. The tension was easing, for the crowd seemed to catch on to what was happening. Surely they had heard of Lazarus being raised from the dead. (John 12:17-18) They even seemed to connect Jesus with the promised Messiah of Psalm 118. ²⁵O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success. (Save us is what they were shouting in the word "Hosanna".) ²⁶Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you. ²⁷The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. (That is where they were headed) ²⁸You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you. ²⁹Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love

Commented [notes17]: ²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

Commented [notes18]: ¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" Genesis 3:1 (NIV)

Commented [notes19]: ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10 (NIV)

Commented [notes20]: ² saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. Mark 11:2 (NIV)

Commented [notes21]: ⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. Luke 5:6 (NIV)

Commented [notes22]: ³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. Mark 4:39 (NIV)

Commented [notes23]: ¹⁰ He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored. Luke 6:10 (NIV)

Commented [notes24]: ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes25]: ¹⁷ Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. ¹⁸ Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him. John 12:17-18 (NIV)

endures forever. (That last verse is the little one line song they sang when the first Temple was filled with the glory of God. (2 Chronicles 7:6) The Glory of God was about to walk into this temple. (John 1:14) It looked and sounded like they finally understood. But they didn't.

⁹*The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!"* All the right words, but all the wrong reasons. Doesn't that happen to us as well? We say and pray things that are really focused on our temporal success, on making us great or more respected. Whenever we think about wanting Wayside to be packed to overflowing like it once was, we must always ask ourselves why we desire that. Is it so that we can be apart of something bigger and better? Is it so that we can have more influence in our community? Wanting to pack the place may be the right request, but what is the reason? Is it so that the souls might hear the words of life and know Christ and then make Him known? If our request is for God's glory, we are on the right track. (John 17:1)

The crowds in Jerusalem had selfish interests in mind. James said that when we ask with the wrong motives we have some kind of selfish lust we desire to fulfill. (James 4:3) God does not answer those requests. Let us have the right words with the right reason.

¹⁰*When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"* That was the question, wasn't it? It is one Jesus asked of His disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" (Matthew 16:13) The answer to the city's question set the stage for the days that followed. They did not have the revelation that Peter had. Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus told Peter that the Father in heaven had given him a revelation for him to discern that. That, indeed, is what it takes. (Matthew 16:16-17)

But ¹¹*The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."* He's just a man, a prophet from the little town of Nazareth. Galilee was the region of the zealot movement. It may be that by mentioning Galilee they were associating Him more with that movement than the Son of God. Who is He to you? The world today would like to call Him a prophet. Certainly He was that, but to us who know Him as our Savior, He is so much more. They wanted Him as a king who would fulfill their dreams. For some today, it is the same. We should want Him as our King of kings. We should desire for Him to master us as He mastered the little unbroken colt.

There is a wonderful story that has been told before by Pastor Ed about this little foal. The next day this colt went back to same road and held his head high. No one applauded; no shouts of hosanna were heard; no palm branches were waved; no one bowed in reverence. "What is going on here?" the little foal asked.

Commented [notes26]: ⁶ The priests took their positions, as did the Levites with the LORD's musical instruments, which King David had made for praising the LORD and which were used when he gave thanks, saying, "His love endures forever." Opposite the Levites, the priests blew their trumpets, and all the Israelites were standing.
2 Chronicles 7:6 (NIV)

Commented [notes27]: ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
John 1:14 (NIV)

Commented [notes28]: ¹ After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you."
John 17:1 (NIV)

Commented [notes29]: ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.
James 4:3 (NIV)

Commented [notes30]: ¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"
Matthew 16:13 (NIV)

Commented [notes31]: ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."
Matthew 16:16-17 (NIV)

He bucked and neighed, "What is the matter with everyone? Can't you see I'm back?" His mother said, "Silly child, it wasn't you they were lauding. It was the One you carried."

We desire to be a vessel for His use. (Acts 9:15) We want Him to get all the glory, not us. Whether it is in seeing this church grow numerically or in influence, we want it all to be for the glory of God. We want the King to reign in our fellowship and in our individual lives. (Romans 5:21)

There is a true story of jockey who attended church one Palm Sunday. He was disgusted with his own lack of self-control and all the trouble his lack of discipline had gotten him into. When he heard the story of the unbroken colt, he knew that it took six weeks to break a colt, and another six to teach it to behave in a crowd. He thought about the shouting crowd and the waving palm branches and realized it was nothing short of a miracle. Then it dawned on him. "If Jesus could master that unbroken colt, He could master me." Right then and there He gave his life to the Master.

Jesus rides gently into our lives, today, on a colt. There is any number of reasons that we say what we do about Him, but there is only one response that He is looking for. Who desires Him as their gentle king? Who would have Him master their passions, their mind, will, and emotions? Who desires Him to reign in their thought life? He is the only One who can tame the energies of youth, the self-seeking desires of man's heart, and channel our energies into His higher purposes, giving us real rest for our souls.

We can shout with the crowd, "Save us! Blessed are you that comes in the Lord's name." But if we don't want this gentle Master to master us, if we only believe He was a good prophet to obtain a better physical life for me right now, how can He save us from our own wicked hearts? He needs to be our King unconditionally if He is to save us. We have to give Him the freedom in our heart to order the necessary changes to truly live. Is He free to Master you today? Or is there an area of donkey like stubbornness that remains unbroken?

Will you give Him permission this morning to master you? Don't just give Him lip service like the crowd that welcomed Him into Jerusalem; yield your heart. Don't just seek a king to serve your purposes; seek a King so honorable, gentle, and loving that you'd desire to serve His purposes.

Commented [notes32]: ¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.
Acts 9:15 (NIV)

Commented [notes33]: ²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Romans 5:21 (NIV)